



**USAID** | **HAITI**  
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# FOOD SECURITY & NUTRITION FACT SHEET

February 2016

## BACKGROUND

Food insecurity is a long-standing challenge in Haiti. Even before the 2010 earthquake, Haiti suffered from one of the heaviest burdens of hunger and malnutrition in the Western Hemisphere: 40 percent of households were undernourished and 30 percent of children suffered from chronic malnutrition. The earthquake not only aggravated existing difficulties, it lessened the government's ability to manage the situation. In the six years since the earthquake, Haiti has made progress but still ranks "alarming" in the 2015 Global Hunger Index. For example, the 2012 Demographic and Health Survey showed that, between 2005-2006 and 2012, stunted children under five years of age decreased from 23.8 to 21.9 percent; wasting decreased from 9.1 to 5.1 percent; and underweight children decreased from 22.2 to 11.4 percent. Still, roughly 50 percent of Haiti's population is undernourished, which has been exacerbated by the longstanding drought and El Niño, leaving 1.5 million Haitians at risk of food insecurity. Haiti cannot achieve economic growth and national stability if food security is not addressed.

## KEY CHALLENGES

**Environmental stability and food production:** Haiti's farm productivity has declined over the past 30 years because of increased environmental degradation, natural disasters and reliance on rain water for crops. Demand for food exceeds local food production. This has created a dependence on imports for more than 50 percent for the population's needs as well as 80 percent of Haiti's main staple, rice.

**Access to food:** Nationally, more than three-quarters of the population lives on less than \$2 per day, and more than half live on less than \$1 per day. Poverty, compounded by the depreciation of the Haitian gourde, means approximately 4.5 million Haitians struggle to access food.

**Infant and early childhood nutrition:** Fewer than half of children younger than six months of age are breastfed exclusively and less than 20 percent of children between 6 and 23 months of age receive appropriate complementary nutrition. As a result, children do not receive the nutrients necessary for healthy growth and development.

## USAID STRATEGY & ACTIVITIES

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) works to ensure that Haitians have access to nutritious, affordable food by promoting efforts to increase locally sourced food through agricultural production while also addressing the immediate needs of food-insecure households.

**Improving access to food and nutrition for vulnerable households:** USAID collaborates with the Government of Haiti to implement a nutrition-focused safety net program, Kore Lavi, aimed at preventing malnutrition among pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and children under five, using a national system of food vouchers and by training community health workers on maternal and child nutrition.

**Promoting sustainable agricultural development:** Through the Feed the Future Initiative, USAID works with Haitian farmers to increase agricultural production, modernize natural resource management and improve food security. To ensure agricultural products make it to market, USAID rehabilitates rural roads, working with farmers to reduce post-harvest losses, and facilitates public private partnerships.

**Ensuring access to school lunch:** To ensure that low-income students have the energy and focus needed to be successful in school and to encourage attendance, USAID supports school feeding activities that provide snacks and hot lunches in several communes across the Central Plateau. The project also empowers local female businesswomen (food vendors) to expand their activities while promoting alternative cooking energy sources among those food vendors.

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Improved access to local and nutritious foods:** The social safety net program, Kore Lavi, has provided access to local and nutritious foods for 15,000 households, enabling nearly 63,000 children to escape the long-term ramifications of malnutrition.

**Increased agricultural productivity:** By supporting more than 300 farmers' associations and working with more than 70,000 farmers, Feed the Future Haiti has increased production of maize, beans, and plantains by a minimum of five times, and tripled rice yields.

**Provided emergency relief for drought-affected communities:** To mitigate the effects of the ongoing drought on food security, USAID provided \$3.9 million in 2015 to fund cash-for-work programs that improved public infrastructure in participating communities.

**Modernized farming techniques and improved weather-related data collection:** USAID has supported the launch of three Rural Research Centers for Sustainable Development that are collecting needed agriculture and weather data. These Centers have trained over 7,000 farmers in sustainable farming techniques, and established greenhouses that reduce pressure on degraded hillsides and benefit more than 15,000 farmers. USAID also constructed the Rivière Grise barrage to provide permanent irrigation water to nearly 10,000 farmers while also preventing flooding in a high-risk region.